

ADDRESS

ON

Conf.

AMERICAN SLAVERY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING,

OF THE

JUNIOR ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

OF PHILADELPHIA.

July 4th, 1838.

BY HENRY PETERSON,
A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

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A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT:—Though it may be deemed by some unnecessary upon the present occasion to enter into a detailed account of those sentiments which we hold as Abolitionists, yet, as we should always be ready to give our reasons for that which we profess, I shall endeavor to illustrate and enforce some of the truths which we believe so important to mankind.

By holding up our principles often to view, we may encourage those already interested in their advocacy, to more active exertions in the great cause of universal liberty. The more we examine this subject, the stronger will be our conviction that our rights are not founded upon the consent or authority of Man, but upon the unchangeable decrees of the Almighty. That they cannot be wrested from us without his displeasure, nor withheld without his condemnation. We shall also find that the government of the natural and physical, is arranged in conformity with that of the moral world. That if we would consult our true interest even in this present life, we must act in accordance with those principles of eternal justice which have been laid down by the great Lawgiver for our obedience.

This is a subject which claims in an especial manner the attention of the young. Manhood, engrossed with business, and accustomed to the present condition of our country, will hardly think of evils which do not directly interrupt the even tenor of its money-getting way. Age, wearied with toil, or smiling and crying in the infirmities of second childhood, has neither vigor of mind nor strength of body for active exertion. It is for the young, then, to take up this cause in their morning, and cheerfully support it during the burden and heat of the day. In the early period of life, when the mind is most free from prejudice,—before the chink of the “almighty dollar” has become a most sweet sound as it rings upon the altar,—before the cold calculations of expediency and selfish prudence have whispered, what is it to thee that thy brother suffers?—when humanity and justice are powerful pleaders with hope in the human breast,—then is it that correct principles appeal with the most force to the understanding and the heart.

The young are also more particularly interested. Manhood and old age may pass away ere the tempest shall burst in its fury,—but the youth of the present, the men of the coming day, may be doomed to abide the storm. Even then considerations of individual safety, inferior as they are to the nobler motive of duty, prompt us to be up and doing; to awake the strong man that now lieth sleeping; to arouse every principle of good, and array all-powerful truth against the dread force of the prince of the air, against the formidable might of the spirit of evil.

The first principle to which I wish to call your attention, and which we hold to be a self-evident truth, is, that

“All men are created equal.”

We do not most certainly mean that all men are made equal in physical strength, or in talents, or with equal advantages as respects bodily and intellectual improvement. But we do mean that all men are created equal in rights. That one man has the same right as any other to life and liberty. That they have these rights, not because they may be rich or poor, educated

or ignorant, among the powerful of this world, or lowly and of no account, white as ivory, or black as ebony;—but because they are men—rational, intelligent, accountable creatures of God. Were this not so, the richer, the more learned, the more powerful, or the whiter any one might be, the greater or lesser would be his rights: and the guilt of crime would be measured by the elevation or degradation of the person, by whom or upon whom it was committed.

All men are equal, inasmuch as they are alike free agents, with power to choose between good and evil; consequently, individually and equally responsible to their Maker for the use of those faculties with which they are endowed. We also believe that these rights are inalienable,—that they are incorporated with our very nature, and that we cannot be deprived of them even with our consent.

What is Slavery?

In answering this question, we must discriminate between cause and effect. We must not pounce upon those cruelties which are the inevitable results of continued servitude, and proclaim these slavery. As well might we go to the mouldering remains of an extensive conflagration, and pronounce the charred and desolate ruins the substance of that mysterious element, fire—as to point out the seared and blackened path traced by oppression upon the living soul, and call this slavery. Slavery is *not* forcing a man to work without wages; it is not brutal treatment, the heart-rending, agonizing scenes of bodily punishment; it is not depriving a man of education, enveloping his mental powers in darkness, and confining his fettered thoughts until they become contented with their prison-house. It does not consist in the separation of parent from child, in the tearing asunder of the heart-strings of affection till not even the gentle hand of pity can tune the broken chords to melody and gladness. These are the dire results,—these are the cursed fruits of a wicked principle,—these, I acknowledge, are the bitter waters flowing from a corrupt and poisoned fountain,—but they are not the principle, the fountain, the great first cause itself.

What, then, is slavery? It is the attempted annihilation of that right of personal ownership, which God has stamped with his eternal seal upon the brow of every man which cometh into the world. It is the considering and using of a man, as a mere piece of property,—it is the attempted degradation of that glorious being, into whom was breathed the breath of life, who was made but a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor, into a chattel, into that very brute which it was designed that he should have rule over. We read that Lucifer, the first of those who tuned their harps around the throne of the Most High, aspired to usurp dominion from his Lord and Master, and was cast into outer darkness for the crime. Slavery is also an attempted usurpation of the government of God: by destroying personal ownership you destroy free agency, and interrupt the accountability of man to his Creator.

By making an intelligent being a slave,—by acting towards him as if his right to himself were annihilated, you invade every other right. He can acquire and possess property for the only and alone reason that he owns himself. Property cannot be the owner of property. This right of personal ownership has been justly described as being the sun of the whole system of rights around which they all revolve;—and you might as well think that you could destroy the sun in the outward universe without producing chaos and destroying the whole system, as think of preserving any rights appertaining to humanity, while you encroach upon this first great prerogative of intelligent being.

Some imagine that the imprisonment of criminals partakes of the nature of slavery, but it is in truth no more so than the confinement of a maniac or lunatic. By imprisoning a man for the preventing or punishing of crime, you do not encroach upon his right to himself. There is the same difference between depriving an individual of his right to personal liberty, and preventing the full exercise of that right for a time as a punishment for bad behaviour, as there is between depriving him of his right to hold property, and depriving him of a portion of that property as a fine for committing offences. In fact, by fining, you acknowledge the undoubted right to hold property; for it would be absurd to attempt to punish by taking away that which is not owned. In like manner, by imprisoning, you acknowledge a right to personal ownership.

Assuming, then, this principle as self-evident, that all men have an equal and inalienable right to personal ownership, slavery, or the considering and using human beings as if their right to themselves were annihilated, must be sin. It is the stealing of a man from himself. We cannot consider it a trivial species of theft, but man-stealing, the highest grade of robbery. If the taking away of your purse without your consent, for my own use, be robbery, is not the stealing of yourself, in the bargain, a much higher grade of crime? If I deprive my neighbor of that which his labor has produced during the past year, the common sense of justice in mankind leads them to consider me a thief; but if I had stolen my neighbor himself a year ago, forcing him to labor for me until this time, would I be a thief? Oh no, a very pious, and conscientious, and religiously disposed individual. If I go to the old man of three score years, and wrest from him his hard earnings, the support of his old age, I am hard-hearted and cruel;—but if I had stolen that same man when an infant, forcing him to labor for me up to this hour without wages, giving him of course sufficient food and clothing, what am I then? A reverend, perhaps,—at the lowest rate, a gentleman perfectly upright and honorable in all the intercourse of life. Is it so? Which of these cases should rank the highest in the nobility of thievery? In the first case, I am stealing my neighbor's property,—he has been master of himself,—has had full liberty to work when and where he chose, pursuing through an active life that course which he thought most conducive to happiness. In the other case, I steal him from himself, deprive him of his personality, make him my tool, and incorporate as far as possible his very existence into my own.

Some may say that this will apply very well to slave-trading; *that*, they acknowledge is very wrong, but that slave-holding is quite another matter. Now, I confess my utter inability to perceive the least difference in principle between them. But remember, that in considering the principle of the first, we have nothing to do with that accumulated mass of misery which clusters around the bloody slave-ship. The foreign slave-trade, if it were allowed by our laws, might be carried on with but few more attendant cruelties than are entailed upon slave-holding. Slavery is sin, because the slave-holder steals the slave himself, not because his ancestor stole the ancestor of the slave some centuries ago. It makes very little difference as regards the morality of theft, whether I begin robbing a man or continue robbing him after some other person has begun; or whether he be robbed here or in Africa. I know it may be said that the slave in this country is not stolen: that it is a purchase, a fair business transaction. But who is the owner of this man thus sold and purchased? None other, most certainly, than himself; and if the slave-holder buys him of any one but himself, he is not buying him of the one that owns him. He is only buying *the power to rob* him; he cannot buy the right, for no one ever possessed it.

But the slave-trader can plead the same excuse. He also often purchases from the petty kings of blood-stained Africa, the power of stealing their unhappy subjects. And even when he does not, when he wrests the poor savage from his native coast by treachery and force, lying in ambush to entrap his helpless victim,—the fitting out of his vessel, the danger of being hung as a pirate if taken, the loss from disease among his human cargo, all are included in the items of cost paid by the slave-trader. Besides, he likewise sometimes purchases those in Africa, who are already slaves,—made so, perhaps, that he may not wound his tender conscience by being the first to steal his fellow man.

But (says an objector) has not the slave-holder a right to enslave the children of his slaves? I answer, that every child is born free. That God never created a human being a slave. How does the slave-holder act in this case? He takes that helpless infant, born free, before it has strength to move, before it has even felt existence, marks out for it a destiny of incessant toil and continued ignorance, decrees that its life shall be a blank, and so far as his power extends, deprives it of the pleasures, the duties, and the accountability of our nature. We may find some excuse for the wild barbarian, who devotes the captive of his bow and lance to toil, offering him the alternative of slavery or death; but what excuse can we offer for the professed Christian, the strong man, who in the full pride of intellect and power outstretches his mighty arm to enslave the helpless infant.

Say not that I am speaking too harshly of the system of slavery. Out of the mouths of its supporters is it condemned. Hear an extract from the speech of John C. Calhoun on the tariff question, delivered in the U. States Senate in 1833: "He who earns the money, who digs it out of the earth with the sweat of his brow, has a just title to it against the universe. *No one* has a right to touch it *without his consent*, except his government, and it only to the extent of its legitimate wants; to take more, is,"—what? Doing that which they should leave undone. Is this the mild language of the patriarchal father? "To take more is *robbery*." If this then be thus rightly denominated, if the depriving a man of his property by government, be in such a case robbery,—by what title shall we designate, not the taking of property by government, but the stealing of it by an individual; not the taking of a man's property only, but the stealing of his person; not the stealing of his person only, but the attempted robbery of mind, body and soul.

It has been asked,—whether if the laws absolutely forbade emancipation, would slavery be sin? We answer, that it would be nearly impossible to frame laws which would prevent masters from liberating their slaves if they chose. It is the will and not the ability which is wanting. But granting that it were otherwise. Suppose an individual to be so situated that he could not by any means liberate his slaves. The supposition has rendered him no longer a slave-holder. If he has the will but not the ability, he is not responsible for the sin of continuance, but only for that of placing himself in such a situation. This, however, does not render slave-holding guiltless; the sin must rest somewhere. If I am compelled by a physical power which I cannot resist, against my will, to plunge a dagger into the heart of another, is murder rendered guiltless? I would not be the murderer, any more than the individual in the former supposition would be the slave-holder; and neither of us would be more guilty than the dagger.

The guilt of slave-holding would in such a case be transferred to the body politic, and he as a member of that body, would be guilty or guiltless in proportion as his abilities had been exerted to have such laws altered or destroyed.

Our opposition to slavery is entirely independent of all that can be urged concerning

The kind treatment of the Slaves.

We care not how beautifully gilded those chains may be with which you have bound him. It is foolish to talk of kind treatment when you are depriving him of all that is most valuable on earth. It equals in absurdity the language of that old Angler, Izaak Walton, who after describing to the novice in that *most gentle and merciful sport*, the proper manner to impale a living frog upon the hook, concludes with,—“And be sure to handle him as if you loved him.” Kind treatment! Is there one in this room who would surrender up his rights, become a piece of property, be subject in all things to my will, part with the knowledge which he may have acquired of things in earth and heaven, on my assurance or written contract that his bodily wants should be supplied, be well clothed, well fed, nor forced to work over even six hours a day? Would all these high and most gracious privileges compensate for the loss of liberty? Is there, I ask, that individual who, like Esau of old, would sell his noble birthright of liberty, his inheritance of glorious and independent manhood, for this poor mess of pottage? Then if your rights were forcibly wrested from you, would you not hurl back with scorn your indignant answer to this plea of kind treatment,—spare your tender mercies and give me my just right.

Do you urge pretended kind treatment as an excuse for slavery? As well might the murderer point as his excuse to the handsomely ornamented dagger with which he had slain, and the splendid sepulchre which he had prepared for his victim. It is the kindness of the highwayman, who after robbing you of your thousand dollars, very politely, in the expansive benevolence of his heart, gives you a five dollar note with which you may begin the world anew: and when you complain of the theft, rolls up his sanctimonious eyes, and wonders at the ingratitude of man. We answer then for him, who cannot answer, for the down-trodden slave, to this excuse of kind treatment,—give us justice, and we will ask no favors.

I wish not to be understood that the master who treats his slaves (as it is termed) cruelly, whips and abuses them, is not more to be blamed than he who treats them (as the phrase goes) well: but simply to show that the sin of *slavery* is not altered by this consideration. The unnecessary abuse is an additional sin.

The right of man to self-ownership being inalienable, the consent of the slave does not justify slavery. If the individual willingly becoming or remaining a slave be intelligent, it involves him in the guilt, but does not justify the master. For instance, if any one of this audience was to become voluntarily the slave of another, both would be guilty. One, for willingly yielding up and resigning to man that direction of his actions, which he is bound to exercise himself under the guidance of his Creator; the other, for usurping the province of God, whose right it is to rule and reign over man. Therefore, the consent of the slave in no wise diminishes the guilt of the master. No one having a right to yield up the government of himself to another,—no one consequently can, without sin, accept that government. It has been ordained, that every human being shall be directly accountable to his Maker; but this would be, to

“Snatch from his hand, the balance and the rod—
Rejudge his justice—be the Lord of God.”

While, if it be the Southern bondsman who avows that he would rather be a slave than a freeman—it makes manifest the horrible effects of this system, in debasing our nature; fully proving the degraded condition in

which, in this land of light, they have been kept, that they can thus prefer the darkness! It reminds me of him, of whom the poet speaks, who, immured in the gloomy dungeon of Chillon, "until his feet have left their trace, worn in its cold pavement, as it were but sod," became contented with his damp and darksome cell:—

"At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be—
I learned to love despair!"

But it is rather singular that, if the slaves do not wish for liberty, so many should endure such great sufferings in their exertions to obtain it; that so many purchase their freedom, and that there are so many advertisements for runaways in Southern papers. I have heard an anecdote upon this point, which is, doubtless, illustrative of the feelings of the whole slave population. Mr. Randolph, of Virginia, being once conversing with a Northern gentleman upon this subject, stated his belief, that the slaves did not desire their liberty; and, to prove it, turned around to one of his favorites, who was near them, saying, "John, you would not accept your freedom, if I were to give it you?" "Try me, Massa!" was the laconic and deep meaning answer. Then, if slaveholders really believe, that they would not accept the boon of emancipation, what objection have they to *try them*?

Immediate Emancipation.

Slavery being sin, and it being the duty of all men to cease sinning immediately, therefore, it is the duty of each and every slave-holder to immediately liberate his or their slaves. But (it may be asked) what do you mean by *immediate* action? We mean, that emancipation should take place as soon as possible; that immediate measures should be taken to effect that liberation. If it can possibly be done, set your slaves free to-morrow—if the laws of your state will not allow it, take immediate means to remove them to some other state, where the laws do not forbid it. Be, at least, as immediate in your exertions to set them free as you were to enslave them. But, says one, do you mean to set them all loose upon society, to give them the right of voting, or to elect them to Congress? We mean that, as slavery consists in uncreating a man, and making him a brute, so far as human laws can effect it, that those laws should be immediately repealed. Remove that weight, which is pressing him into a thing, and, by the elasticity of his nature, he will rise again into manhood.

We use the term, immediate, in opposition to gradual,—in opposition to any term which implies a partial emancipation. If one slave has a right to liberty, all have; and, if there is one who has not,—if there are those, of whatever age or condition, who have not, none have. Slavery is either right or wrong: if right,—why abolish it at all? If wrong, it should be immediately and unconditionally abolished; and all schemes of emancipation must fail in proportion as they fall short of the full measure of perfect justice. It is not a consequence of immediate abolition, that those emancipated should be immediately invested with all the privileges of citizenship. We neither wish nor expect it. Their ignorant and degraded condition would unfit them for many of those which we enjoy. As they, however, gradually elevate themselves, additional immunities should be granted, until, at length raised entirely from their low estate, they stand upon a level with us, in all the civil and political relations of life.

The privileges which we exercise, as intelligent and social beings, may be divided into two great classes:—Those, which are inalienable; and those

which are alienable and transferable. Those rights, which belong to us as human beings—which are the direct gift of God—which may not be taken away or parted with, without guilt: and those which may more properly be denominated privileges, which are conferred upon us, as members of society, as citizens of human governments. Among the first may be classed the right of a man to himself, to his life and liberty. Those which belong to the second class, are such as the elective franchise, the immunities conferred upon members of incorporated companies, &c., which are the gift of the state, and may, in some or many cases, be withheld without injustice. We mean, then, by immediate emancipation, that all laws which allow one man to trample upon the inalienable rights of another, be instantly repealed. The slave then becomes a man. By overthrowing the principle which considers him a chattel, all laws based upon this wicked foundation fall to the ground. Laws which render null and void the marriage contract, which perpetuate ignorance, which allow one individual to abuse another in any manner, all founded upon the monster principle that man can justly hold property in man, die with the death of their evil author.

If slavery be sin, and immediate emancipation be duty, we should allow no considerations of inexpediency to deter us from doing this duty. If our conscience makes manifest to us that such a course would be most in conformity with Christian principles, though a morbid fancy might picture to us an Union severed, and a land stained with blood, it would be no excuse for inaction. What! are we to presume to parley with High Heaven about consequences? Suppose that those who were called to propagate the great truths of our religion, the apostles of old, had looked forward into coming time, anticipating the riot and confusion which their preaching should occasion in the world. Imagine for a moment that they had allowed such forebodings to have influenced their conduct. When they were persecuted from city to city; when the Roman emperor raised that cruel outcry, which deluged the land with Christian blood; when thrown to wild beasts, mocked, outraged, and crucified—suppose they had yielded to such apprehensions, swerving hither and thither, as their weak notions of good or bad results pointed out,—would they have acted as Christian disciples, the followers of the heavenly light? or as the vain pursuers of “an ignis-fatuus, which leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind?” Thus, even were there cause to believe that the present consequences would be disastrous, the duty of immediate emancipation would require the sacrifice, trusting in that providence which will protect those who do justly.

Duty is always ultimately expedient. In this case we have every reason for believing (judging of the future from the past) that it would not only be ultimately but instantly expedient. What is duty? It is obedience to the commands of the Creator. And will any one contend, that obedience to Him is ever inexpedient? It is impious. It is an insult to the overruling majesty of omnipotence. What other rule have we to govern us in great questions of this nature? Shall we, with our feeble vision, endeavor to penetrate the deep gloom which overshadows futurity, and decide what events will then ensue? Foolish presumption! That which may appear to lead to evil consequences may result in happiness to all. Let us then cheerfully pursue the course which conscience dictates; and, though clouds may seem to darken around our path, confide, with trusting confidence, in His all powerful might, who—

“ From seeming evil still educes good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression.”

I have sometimes heard a very pretty simile introduced into debate, to the following effect. If you had a bird confined in a cage, and a hawk were hovering over it, would you open the door immediately, and let the bird fly out and be devoured by the ferocious hawk? I answer, that the comparison of the poor slave to a gentle and innocent bird comes with a bad grace from the same objector, who in another part of the argument will liken him to a wild beast, and ask whether you will unchain him before he is tamed. In the second place, the comparison is not good, because the colored people are in no danger from starvation and ruin, which I suppose are the dreaded results represented by the hungry hawk: for it is odd, if, after supporting themselves and masters while slaves, they should not be able to support themselves alone when freemen. But to answer plainly and directly this very nice question, I contend—that if the poor caged bird had the same right to its liberty as the slave has to his freedom, that duty would require that the door should be immediately opened; resting in the full assurance, that He whose all pervading vision allows not even a sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed, would blind the eyes of the cruel and rapacious hawk.

With regard to the other opinion to which I have alluded, viz., that the liberated slaves would turn upon their former masters, cutting their throats and firing their dwellings—although it is hardly worth noticing on account of its being so contrary to the knowledge which we have of our own nature as displayed on the page of history—I answer—1. That they would have very little more power to work mischief than they now have. 2. That the cause of insurrection and danger being removed, the interests of the two classes instead of being opposed to each other, as they now are, would be identical. And 3. That it is a gross absurdity to suppose that those who have borne evil treatment patiently, will not endure good treatment. It manifests an utter ignorance of the springs of human action. Treat a man well, behave towards him as a brother, confess you have done him wrong, declare your determination to atone for such injustice, and it is not in human nature to resist the appeal. “It is in vain that we would coldly gaze on such as smile upon us; the heart must leap kindly back to kindness.”

Certainly those who raise this objection cannot have a very high opinion of the chivalry of the South: or is it a chivalry which consists in an utter recklessness of safety in an evil course, and yet fears the perils of doing justly? I leave it to those who prate so long and loudly of courageous deeds to answer this question.

Having explained what we mean by immediate emancipation, referring any one who wishes for further proof of its safety to the late instances in the islands of Antigua and Bermuda, I shall now make a few remarks upon the policy of gradual abolition. Proving the truth of the general principle, that the more we fail of coming up to the standard of perfect justice and right, in the same degree do our actions become inexpedient.

Gradual Abolition.

All plans of gradual abolition, however different they may be in other respects, unite in one grand feature;—the propriety of a partial emancipation. They all uphold the danger of liberating the mass of the slaves at once, and insist upon the greater safety of giving freedom to stated portions at different periods of time. The friends of this system may be divided into two great classes. Those in favor of the colored people remaining in this country, and those in favor of abolition going hand in hand with colonization, and no faster. We will first consider the expediency of the last mentioned plan as a remedy for slavery. And I wish it to be distinctly understood that I am not assailing the *Colonization Society*. We have other grounds on which

we oppose it and its objects particularly. The objections which I shall urge are such as can be adduced against any system which admits the principle of colonization conjointly with abolition.

We contend then that any plan of colonization which professes to be a remedy for slavery, should be capable of effecting the removal of at least the increase of our slave population; and as that increase is at the rate of nearly two hundred per day, we think it impracticable, granting that all other circumstances were favorable: when we add to this the attachment of the colored people to this, their native land, their oft repeated objections to any system of expatriation, which objections have been gathering strength with time, we might content ourselves with giving as an answer to those who propose thus to abolish slavery, two very satisfactory reasons,—1. That our colored inhabitants would not leave this country if they could. And 2. That you could not remove them if they would.

But suppose these objections overcome—that they were willing to go, that it were possible to send out sixty or seventy thousand the coming year. And remember that the advocate of this plan has embarked in a greater undertaking than what we have; we only wish to prevail upon the master to free his slaves; he in addition to this must prevail upon him to raise the necessary funds to transport them to the colony. But grant (as I wish to be very obliging) that they had overcome this difficulty also; that the slaveholders were to become suddenly so very liberal, and that in spite of all difficulties they are able to send away and comfortably provide for the annual increase of the coming year. What is the result? What consequences follow the removal of sixty thousand labourers from the Southern states? There is nearly the same demand for the products of labor, but who is to do the work? What would be the effect of the death, or colonization if you will, of the annual increase of our horses? The value of the remaining portion is increased: and if the same course was to be pursued the following year, there would be a greater increase of value; and so on, until they rose to the highest price which a purchaser could afford to give—a sum equivalent to the product of their labor. The great staples of the South could not be produced in the same quantity as before; their price would also raise;—and the planters wishing to make as much as possible out of their slaves while they have them, over-work them, and the incentive of gain acts as a spur to cruelty.

But how is this great demand for laborers, caused by the removal of so many of her working population, to be supplied? It must be supplied from somewhere, or else the country be again covered with the wild luxuriance of the Southern forests. The deficiency must then be obviated in one of two ways. Either by bringing in more slaves from Africa, or by procuring free white laborers. Will you adopt the first plan? Are you advocates of a system by which sixty thousand negroes may be sent out through the Chesapeake, and as many smuggled in to supply their place, through the sandy keys of the Carolinas and Florida, or along the open shores of the Gulf of Mexico? This we have many reasons for believing would be the case. We know from statements lately made to the British Parliament that the slave trade flourishes with undiminished vigor. It has been computed by Southern legislators, that many thousands are annually imported into the Southern states: and who can doubt but what fresh victims would supply the bloody altars of this Christian land. I know that it has been said that colonies will be planted along the coast of Africa, and thus prevent the slave trade—but be assured there is only one mode to put an end to this odious traffic; that mode is to abolish slavery. You may dot the coast of Africa with colonies, and line that of America with ships of war from Greenland to Cape Horn;

and yet so long as there exists a demand for slaves, that demand will be supplied. See how ineffectual have been all the exertions of England, with her multitude of excise officers and revenue cutters, to prevent smuggling even along her short coast; how vain to think of our effecting it, along a coast of many thousand miles. Why if the Atlantic coast of America, and the western coast of Africa be securely guarded; the Pacific of the one, and the eastern of the other would still be open; and the trader with his blood red flag, aye, and his blood red track upon the waters, would laugh you to scorn.

Of whom would these colonies consist? Of an ignorant and degraded people. Then when we find that enlightened professing *Christians* in our own land cannot withstand the lust of gain, when even ministers at the altar will not refrain from robbing the poor,—how can we expect that these unenlightened colonists will set us an example by refusing to join in this wicked traffic. When we remember that even the British colony of Sierra Leone was represented, in reports made to the government of that anti-slavery country, as being a depot for slave-ships; that the colonists there were directly charged with being implicated in this trade in human flesh and blood; can we reasonably expect, that colonists going from here, notwithstanding the good advice which might be impressed upon them by the precepts and example of our orthodox divines, would keep their hands entirely clean?

We will, however, grant for the sake of the argument, that this course would not be taken, that planting colonies along the western coast of Africa would effectually guard against the prosecution of the slave-trade. Then the South must take the other means of procuring laborers. She must invite to assist her, free white laborers from the North, or emigrants from Europe. Would this be expedient? Would it be even safe to introduce white freemen to work along with slaves? What class of our population would she be able to procure? Not the hardy yeomanry of our land, men who would be a protection against insurrection. The honest, noble-hearted mechanic and farmer of the free states would not be willing to live among those who count labor disgraceful. Such men would not feel anxious to leave the rude climate of the hilly North, to work shoulder to shoulder with the slaves of the unhealthy South. They would obtain the dregs only of our population—a class destitute of honorable or independent feelings, who being too lazy and immoral to obtain subsistence here, except in almshouses or prisons, would eagerly embrace the offer of high wages and little work in the South. Or instead of such men from us, they might be able to obtain a similar kind from Europe. Which side would such a class be inclined to take in troublesome times?—men of no principle, perhaps marrying and intermarrying with the slaves. Would they espouse the cause of the master, their superior, with nothing to gain; or that of the slave, with nothing to lose, every passion to satiate, every lawless desire to gratify? Such a class would also know, that when society is disordered and confused, there is some chance of the dregs coming uppermost, and would therefore excite insurrection. The slave likewise would contrast his situation with that of his white fellow-laborer, and become discontented and ripe for revolt. Are our Southern brethren anxious for such a quiet servile population? It would be rather a restless “corner-stone” to build upon.

While if you do not remove the increase of our colored inhabitants, but only carry out the free among them, or a few of the slaves, you are but pruning away the superfluous branches which retard the growth of the tree of slavery, and causing it to flourish with renewed vigor.

But there are many who have abandoned the system of colonization as a remedy for slavery, who yet cling to some mode (they hardly know what)

of gradual and partial abolition. We shall find, however, if we examine, that all plans of gradualism are open to similar objections.

Suppose a system of gradual emancipation was to be adopted, by which all the slaves would be liberated in the course of half a century; that under the operations of this plan forty thousand were to be emancipated in the coming year. What is to become of them? The South already complains of its free colored population as being a nuisance,—and why are they thus worthless? Because they cannot obtain employment. They are not hired to work on plantations, from fear of their exerting a bad influence over the slave. They are not even permitted, much less encouraged, to improve their minds and elevate themselves in the scale of being. And so long as slavery exists in the South, so long will it be nearly impossible to much improve their condition. The same causes which operate to render the present free colored people nuisances, would conspire in like manner to make this newly liberated body also nuisances. It would be impossible to find them employment on account of the danger of mixing free with slave laborers. Those among them of the most intellect and best morals would come to the North,—preferring occupation and knowledge here, although accompanied with the lowering clouds of prejudice, to idleness, ignorance, and darker prejudice there. I commend this result of gradual emancipation, to all those in the Northern states, who have so much dread of an increase of this class of our citizens. Then the question, who are to supply their places as laborers on the Southern plantations? together with that last mentioned, what is to become of those liberated under this gradual process? is left for solution.

Some imagine that as abolition in our own state was gradual, where we had so few slaves, that there is more necessity for it, and more danger to be apprehended from immediate emancipation in the South, where there are so many. This, however, is a false view of the subject. It will appear evident, after a moment's reflection, that the danger to be apprehended from gradual abolition, is increased in proportion to the number of slaves. Where there are comparatively few, as it was in Pennsylvania, the liberation of a portion every year will be attended with but few evil results. The great preponderance of the free white population is a safeguard against the danger of insurrection, arising from mixing free and slave labor. Those emancipated either continue working for wages with their former masters, or easily find employment somewhere else. On the contrary, the greater the proportion of slaves, the more danger will result from mixing the two classes, and the more obvious the necessity of removing all cause of jealousy and mistrust, by immediate and impartial emancipation.

Such would be the bad effects of any plan of a partial character. Five or six years' experience of these evils would prevent any further liberation. The mischievous consequences of a system of gradualism would be imputed to abolition itself, and the progress of universal liberty retarded.

Thus we find that by pursuing the course marked out by duty, we may confidently hope for the reward of obedience. By adopting measures similar to those adopted by Bermuda and Antigua, we may expect to reap like them the reward of well-doing—the substitution of a happy peasantry, with interests identical with our own, in the place of a discontented and restless population. Instead of prayers offered up at the shrine of murder and revenge, the incense from grateful hearts would ascend to Him who had given repentance the victory. Who is there among us that does not wish for this coming time,—when truth shall prevail over falsehood, when right shall triumph over might, when justice and mercy shall conquer injustice and oppression, and the divine nature in man overcome the spirit of evil? Can we doubt our success? Doubt it not. Trust in the power of righteousness, confide in the

providence of God. Assuredly the same eternal Spirit, which in the beginning brooded over the face of the waters, bringing out of chaos a bright and glorious universe, will, in these latter days, overspread the warring elements of tumultuous thought, producing as beautiful a creation in the spiritual, as was then effected in the natural world.

Having thus endeavored to illustrate some of our principles, I shall now consider the

Measures of the Abolitionists.

The first is the organization of societies. Is there any thing blameable in this? If it be proper for one man to disseminate principles which he believes of great importance, why not join with another who holds similar opinions? If you grant that one may properly associate with another, why not unite with many, if by so doing our principles can be disseminated more effectually? It is only in the rudest state of society that men attempt any undertaking separately. The principle of association is carried out through every department of active life. It has been borrowed from the vast book constantly outspread before our eyes. Look abroad upon all the operations of nature. Behold the feathery vapor floating in the heavens,—the watery particles unite, and the rain descends in torrents. Look further, and see the tiny rivulet formed by the united action of the drops of rain, gladdening with its joyous presence the fields of the husbandman, scarcely visible as it creeps through their grassy covering, “which, by a livelier green, betrays the secret of its silent course.” Proceed with the winding rivulet, increasing constantly by the aid of others, till it grows into the shady creek,—swelling at length into the mighty and majestic river, bounding with the consciousness of strength, exulting in the nobility of beauty. Onward with the current, and estimate the power of united action, by the deep and boundless ocean. When thus nature herself speaks to us, trumpet-tongued, of the power of accumulated strength,—when we see the petty snowball gathering weight with every revolution, until at length it becomes the irresistible avalanche, overpowering every obstacle that would arrest its course,—when we behold this tremendous power exerted daily by wicked men for evil purposes, shall we not be allowed to exercise it for good?

Our first measure has been, then, to place ourselves in that position from which our strength could best be exerted. We have united for the purpose of disseminating our principles; to enforce upon the country the sin of slavery, and the duty of repentance; to awaken the attention of the careless, to arouse the sympathy of the warm hearted, and impress upon all classes of the community, the absolute necessity of acting justly towards an injured and much despised race. In order to effect this, every means has been taken, consistent with morality. We have printed, and published, and spoken; exposing on all occasions the infamous character of slavery; maintaining the dignity of human nature, the inalienable rights of man.

Aware of the support given to oppression by the people of the nominally free states—the establishment and continuance by them of this system of legal wrong, in the District of Columbia and Territories, exertions have been made to induce them to rid themselves of all participation in this matter. The conduct of those pretended *Democrats*, who declaim of Liberty and Equality, while they trample in the dust their fellow men, has been held up to fitting scorn. Not only Southern but Northern politicians have had their shining veils torn off, and their lineaments of hypocrisy exposed. The claims of friendship have been regarded but as dust in the balance, when weighed against the great interests of our race, and corruption and rottenness in the high places of the church pointed out with an unfaltering hand.

We have also endeavored to raise the character of the free colored people among ourselves; to encourage them in the pursuit of knowledge, to elevate their moral standing, and improve their social and political condition; protesting against those laws which place them in an inferior rank, and advocating the bestowal upon them of every privilege which is enjoyed by us as members of society.

I know that these measures, especially those which relate to the dissemination of our principles, are scoffed at and derided. But remember that we are following the example of all reformers. Every reformation must be carried out by enforcing its just claims upon the minds of men. The community often becomes dead to great principles of morals. Those whom it looks to as teachers, become infected with a dreamy, contented, slothful inaction. What course, then, should be pursued by those who fortunately awake and see the danger? If you had a dear friend who was fast falling into a dissolute course of life, would you content yourself with doing nothing, trusting that some providential interference would arrest his downward course? Every one must answer in the negative. Apply this example to the subject before us. When the few who first became conscious of its importance met together, they beheld with sorrow the deadly torpor of the community, which like the benighted wanderer in the snowy regions of the North, was fast sinking under the cold chill of an unfeeling prejudice. What were they to do? The land must be aroused; the stagnant blood must be made to flow throughout its arteries and veins. And, as in the case of the benumbed traveller, the heat is restored to the system by friction and agitation,—so they also began (not perhaps as gently as might be) to quicken the circulation in the body politic by a similar course; and if the necessary friction was not administered with the finest napkin, the result thus far leads us to believe that the coarse towel is the best for restoring animation.

It may perhaps be well to notice now some of those objections which are so frequently urged against us. Among the first may be mentioned the oft-repeated one—

What has the North to do with Slavery?

Although it can with difficulty be credited, that any sane man should see any force in this objection, yet, “as it takes all sorts of people to make up a world,” I will give it a brief, though it is to be hoped, satisfactory answer. In the first place it may be stated, that the free states being the supporters of slavery in the District of Columbia and Territories, are in fact slaveholders themselves; and if we have no right to meddle with an institution, for the existence of which we are responsible, I wonder who has.

In the second place, we are compelled to deliver up all “fugitives from labor,” (in other words, slaves,) who believing “that one day, one hour of virtuous liberty is worth a whole eternity of bondage,” strive to escape from the loving embraces of these “patriarchs” and their disciples—forced by law to suppress each generous feeling, which would open every avenue of escape, and bid the flying bondsman “God speed,”—compelled to yield him up to heartless abuse, if it can be proved that he has been abused or tyrannized over before. Some may foolishly think, that the evidence of an individual having been placed in a situation *once*, where he might be treated badly with impunity, is rather a reason for *not* placing him in such a situation again; but it is one of the beautiful consistencies of our admirable laws, that in order to obtain power to continue abusing and degrading a man, you must prove, either that he has thus been treated in former times, or that you abused and degraded his mother before him.

We have then a right to meddle with this subject, not only because we are slaveholders, but because the laws of our land force us to be slave-traders; requiring us to render up the innocent upon the production of testimony that he has formerly been in a state of wretched servitude, while we should always demand (in the language of the Vermont Justice) "a bill of sale signed with the hand and seal of the Almighty."

Again—by becoming partners with the South, by uniting with her in this union, and pledging the physical strength of the whole confederacy for the protection of the masters against insurrection, we entered into a partnership of guilt. The articles in the Constitution concerning domestic violence, makes it *the duty* of Congress in some cases to intermeddle with slavery. Suppose that we wished to amend the Constitution by striking out or altering these articles, would we not have an undoubted right to urge the infamous nature of slavery as a reason for wishing such an amendment?

It has been argued with much force, that the clauses referred to, open the whole subject to the superintendence of the general government. The question has been asked—must Congress interfere to suppress, and shall it have no power to prevent an insurrection? Must the general government wait until the whole land is lighted up with the incendiary's fire, or may precautionary measures be taken? If she has power to do the last, and if the abolition of slavery be deemed the only safe mode of preserving peace and insuring safety, has she not power so to do? But however the sage judges of constitutional law shall decide this matter, there can be no doubt but what we are bound to use every moral means against every moral evil. When we are slaveholders and traders ourselves, when we are interested as those who feel for their country's character before the world, when above all we believe slavery to be a sin in which we are verily guilty concerning our brother, every consideration of justice requires us to urge upon the community its odious character, to enforce the duty of immediate abandonment of crime.

Well (says an objector) suppose we grant all this, but if you wish to disseminate your principles

Why don't you go to the South?

If it were proper to answer one question by asking another, we might put the very simple one—why should we go? As it would be difficult to prove that any good would ensue, and as abolitionists are not fond of perilling life without some expectations of doing good, or in the path of duty, they stay at home.

We are referred, I know, to the example of the apostles; but the circumstances in which we are placed are different. In their early day it was absolutely necessary that men should be personally spoken to if you would engage their attention. Now, in these times of intellectual light, when the art of printing has attained to such perfection that books are in every child's hand, there is not the same necessity for speaking publicly to men. We can often appeal by the aid of the press more powerfully to the intellect and feelings, than by the living agent. In the one case, there is not the excitement of argument; the mind in the cool tranquillity of the silent chamber, more readily acknowledges the power of the truth: while in the other, the presence of an opponent arouses the passions and blinds the understanding.

We are commanded to take the beam out of our own eye, that we may see clearly to take the mote out of our brother's. And were we to follow the advice of some, and go to the South, supposing as no one does that we would be listened to, *they* might ask us a like, though much more sensible question,—why don't you stay at home? You acknowledge that you are

slave-holders, you admit that the colored people in the North are not treated as they ought to be,—Physician first heal thyself. Then when the free states become thoroughly Anti-Slavery, it will be time enough to ask us, why we do not go to the South. But so long as they continue to uphold slave-holding in principle and practice, it will be useless to attempt to do much with our Southern neighbors.

It is also said, that our societies have now been in operation about five years,—but

What good has been effected ?

How many slaves have you liberated? We answer to the last question that we have record of at least five hundred slaves which have been emancipated by masters who have embraced our principles, and shown by their works that they are established in the true faith.

Have we rendered the treatment of the slaves, generally, more rigorous? As I cannot speak from personal observation, we must judge of the behaviour of the slave-holders from what we think the conduct of men placed in their situation would naturally be. Suppose a master mechanic was justly accused of using his apprentices badly, and every body was inquiring into the truth of the accusation; peeping into his shop to see for themselves, and subjecting all his actions to close scrutiny. Would he go on in his cruel course and treat them worse than ever: or rather would he not attempt to prove that his treatment of them had been always good, by acting towards them, when all his neighbors were overlooking his conduct, uncommonly well. Now it appears to me, that as public attention has been called to the bad condition of the slaves, as the Abolitionists have been charged with being vile slanderers, &c., that the slave-holder would hardly abuse his slaves more than ever, for the very singular purpose of proving our accusations false. Is it not more reasonable to suppose, that, especially in those parts of the South which are frequently visited by strangers, the treatment of the slaves will be better in proportion as public attention is called to this subject. Awake the attention of mankind to any abuse, and in eight cases out of ten you will meliorate it. The other two cases are, where the perpetrator of cruelty has become so hardened in his crimes, or has such ungovernable passions, that interference only causes him to wreak heavier vengeance upon the suffering. Do our opponents mean to include the Southern chivalry in either of these classes? Do they mean to say, that slave-holders being mad at the Abolitionists, and having no power to punish them, pour out all their accumulated wrath upon the helpless slave. If they do intend this, they are portraying them as men destitute of all that ennobles our nature,—mere creatures of passion, visiting upon the poor bondsman their indignation at the conduct of him whom they cannot silence. If it be true, it proves that the most limited power over their fellows should be kept from those who are themselves the obedient servants of the grossest passions.

But granting (for the sake of the argument) that the privileges of the slaves have been lessened. Does this prove our principles to be wrong, or that we should not agitate this question? Did it prove Moses and Aaron wrong, that the people upbraided them with adding to their sufferings, by remonstrating with Pharaoh? Let us suppose a similar case. A slave-trader goes to Mr. Clarkson and says:—"My friend, you have certainly made a great mistake in your opposition to the slave-trade. You have at last prevailed upon government to declare it piracy, and ships of war are sent out to capture us. Do you not know that the condition of the negro has been rendered worse by this? Formerly none suffered but by confinement, hunger, thirst,

disease, &c., now we are oftentimes pursued, and, as there is no pleasure in being taken, have to throw overboard our whole cargo. While if, instead of coming out so fanatically against the *trade itself*, you had only opposed its *abuse*,—if you had endeavored to have had larger ships built, more convenient for storage, than these fast running vessels, which we are now compelled to have—if you had passed laws regulating the commerce, so that no vessel under a given number of tons should carry more than a certain number of slaves, and thus exerted your influence to meliorate their condition,—there would have been no more slaves carried away from Africa than there has been, and many lives and much suffering been spared.” Would Mr. Clarkson and his coadjutors be led by such reasoning to regret their active opposition to the slave-trade? Most certainly not. And though the slave-holders of this age, like the Egyptians of old, harden their hearts, and listen not to the commands of God; though they obey not the dictates of the Most High, nor let his people go; though like them they heap even heavier burdens upon the backs of the suffering and down-trodden;—following the example of the anti-slavery prophet, the abolitionists of the present day will still continue to demand the liberation of the injured bondsman.

Have the Anti-Slavery Societies done nothing, can they do nothing towards effecting their great object? What then are the friends of Slavery complaining about? If our exertions tend only to rivet tighter the chains of the oppressed, why do the friends of “the patriarchal system” talk of putting us down by force? Why make penal laws against us? I should think that if we were putting back for centuries the day of emancipation, that such shortsighted men as John C. Calhoun and George McDuffie, instead of advising our being “hanged without judge or jury,” would rather encourage us. Ah! it is the *wounded* bird that flutters. This fiery opposition to us is proof that we have aimed our truth-pointed arrows at the vulnerable part of this iniquitous system, and that the monster feels, and agonizes in the pangs of approaching dissolution.

What have the Abolitionists done? Contrast the situation of our country now, with what it was before their organization in 1832. The demon of Slavery was fast overshadowing the whole land with his presence, breathing into every heart his pestilent and noisome breath. That anti-slavery spirit which had manifested itself after the Revolution, was fast dying with those bright sons of the morning who had been administering at its pure and heavenly altar. The existence of Slavery among us was remembered only as an evil to be deplored,—not remedied. We were all opposed to it in theory, but our opposition was harmless. No complaint was made of our principles, because we did not attempt to enforce their truth, or carry them into practice. It is impossible for good and evil to rest together in peace; one must be gradually obtaining the supremacy. What is our condition now? We are all awake. Some to be sure rubbing their eyes, and taking in their half-blindness a wrong or wavering course; but though the prejudices of the day may have the effect of warping our judgments for a while, it is not probable we shall stop thinking, until we begin to think rightly.

They have maintained the right of free discussion. This essential element of liberal institutions is to the moral world, what the tides, the waves, and agitation are to the wide spread waters. As the latter becomes by constant stillness putrid and corrupt, so does the great ocean of human opinion stagnate, without the excitement of unfettered inquiry; settling down into a quiet, which breeds evil and perverted reason in the heart of man. As there is in the physical, so there appears to be in the mental creation, a vis inertia, a dislike to change. Men are not easily prevailed upon to alter opinions which they long have held, no matter how loosely they were at first adopted.

Their thoughts, accustomed to run in one direction, wear a channel which is difficult to turn. Thus, without free inquiry, time would perpetuate error. Praise should then be awarded to that little band, who nobly advocated before the world the freedom of thought and expression. Enduring without complaint the odium of popular clamor, awake to the dignity and importance of their high calling, they steadily maintained the truth, and by the power of that which they upheld, triumphed over all the obstacles which cunning deceit and guilty sophistry had reared around the exercise of this important right.

You cannot, however, judge as yet of what has been really done. The seed has been planted of a great moral revolution; and it is absurd to find fault with us because the fields are not yet "white unto harvest." You might as well go to the farmer, after he had turned in the sod, and scattered his seed in the earth, reproaching him with having done nothing but mischief; with having destroyed that green carpet which was so beautiful, putting in its place a rough, uneven surface of ugly clods:—and when he should tell you of his prospects of the coming year, of this seed taking root, and springing up in beautiful fertility, you might as well deride him and his prospects, as laugh at us when we assert, that though we may have substituted the rough clods of uncompromising truth, for the too-satisfied and contented feelings, that the seeds which we are planting shall spring forth a harvest of all that is beautiful and attractive in the moral world.

It is also objected,—that we wish to abolish Slavery without

Compensating the Slave-holder.

But it should first be proved that they would sustain loss. We know that estates have risen fifty per cent. in value in the West Indies since abolition. We know that free-labor is much more productive and profitable than slave-labor. We have every reason for believing that abolition would regenerate the old slave states, and "make their deserts rejoice, and blossom as the rose." We know that there would then be no fear of insurrection; that they would not then be guilty of entailing on their posterity a system which they themselves acknowledge to be a curse; that a deadly blow would be given to that immorality which is now preying upon the happiness of all classes. Then, as it is evident that it would be a source of so much advantage, not only pecuniary but moral, where is the great injustice in asking them to confer a favor upon themselves, without pay. But granting that it would be a severe pecuniary loss. We must certainly contend that an individual is bound to give up stolen property, even though by such a course he should be compelled to work for his living. Go to the highwayman and urge the sin of robbery. He answers,—Why would you deprive me of my means of subsistence? And if we allow this consideration to have any virtue in one case, it will be continually pleaded in all, from the petty pilferer to the daring pirate.

As regards Slavery under the authority of the general government, we hold, that Congress is bound to administer justice impartially in those places where it has "exclusive jurisdiction." Now as the whites have been allowed to rob the colored people in the District of Columbia for many years with impunity, if the situation of the two parties was reversed could the former complain? Or if you must have compensation given, let Congress ascertain the amount of which the latter has been robbed, and make the masters give them their freedom and an adequate sum beside. Though no money, no heaps of silver or golden ore, could compensate the slave for the almost

endless measure of unceasing wrong which has been poured out on his devoted head—let the master be credited with the cost of their maintenance, and his fatherly care; let him be debited with their labor, their ignorance, their lacerated hearts, their blasted happiness, and ruined hopes;—then strike the balance, giving compensation where it is due.

The charge has also been made, that our principles will lead to a

Dissolution of the Union.

We answer to this serious charge, in the first place—That if our principles be correct, and if the principles upon which the Union is founded be also correct, there can be no danger of the two clashing. Two principles both established in truth, will never work out each other's ruin. If you believe that this government is based upon the principles of immutable justice, and that our principles are also just, their success will not destroy it; while if it is not founded on a righteous basis it ought to be destroyed. Another proposition is also true;—that if the Union be not established on the same principles upon which Slavery is established, one will certainly overthrow the other. Slavery (if such be the case) must destroy the Union, or the Union destroy Slavery.

But who is it that menaces the dissolution of this confederacy? The very men who are so much afraid of our effecting it, are continually threatening to do it themselves. It is not from the free states that this danger is apprehended: and as it is the slave states which will do the mischief, if it is done at all, let us inquire what good would result to them from the dissolution. We can easily conceive the good results which follow the threat, and we find that it has been continually threatened upon all occasions. Does a Southerner fear the passage or repeal of any law, he immediately (not gradually) betakes himself to the old humbug of dissolving the Union. They say, that a Southern lady having once complained to her husband, who was a member of Congress, about the high price of clothing for the children,—he posted to his place in the house, and after stating in a most pathetic and moving manner, how the money was being continually drained out of his pocket, declared that if they did not abolish the tariff, he'd blow the Union sky-high. I shall not, however, vouch for the truth of this anecdote.

The threat of dissolving the Union is coeval with the Union. It has been repeated whenever necessary to bully the North into the support of Southern measures: and when this course does not succeed, just as the proper time arrives to carry the threat into execution, *Love of Country* seizes them like an apoplexy, or swallows them up like a great anaconda, and for a time all is silent. South Carolina, in her ignorance or impetuosity, once, it will be remembered, attempted it; but she was promptly put down by slave-holders themselves, who knew the great virtue in the threat, and the great danger in its execution.

If there is an absurd idea in existence, it is that of preventing all discussion about Slavery, by separating the North from the South. It is like attempting to conceal from the world the quarrels between a man and his wife, by applying to the Legislature for a divorce. The connection cannot be destroyed in a moment. This subject must first be discussed. Our Southern brethren must consider which is worth the most, the Union and no Slavery, or Disunion and no Slavery. Politicians and churchmen, women and children, bond and free, social circles and ale-house frequenters, all would begin arguing about Slavery and Abolition. Why *our* little excitement would be completely lost in the whirlwind of discussion which would then

sweep over the land. Curious eyes (which now see not) would be peering into the dark and loathsome recesses of "the patriarchal system," and the happy results of agitation with inquiry would be attained. Some may think, however, that the South, if unconnected with the North, could prevent the distribution of "incendiary papers," and prohibit those holding "fanatical opinions" from coming among them. This has already been effected. Their statute laws now prohibit the circulation of our pamphlets; their admirable system of Lynch Law menaces death to him who is suspected of attachment to the cause of universal liberty.

But suppose the Union was dissolved. What would be the better situation of the Southern states? Which of them would consent to form the boundary line of a new *Slave-holding Republic*. Would Maryland, and Virginia, and Kentucky? Grant that they would,—although it is doubted that they would join in such a case with the South. Remember that this boundary line, formed by the Northern frontiers of these states, is only imaginary. And without every foot of it was manned with chivalrous Southerners, they would see a practical illustration of "wealth takings wings to itself and flying away," to the tune of, not all the blue, but "all the black bonnets going over the border." Are the before mentioned states so very patriotic and devoted, that they would behold all "the corner stones" of their own liberty slipping from under them, in order to preserve the glorious edifice of their more Southern neighbors? The colored brethren would colonize themselves by thousands into the free states; doing more in one year towards the abolition of Slavery, than our colonization friends would do in a century. And if prejudice was too strong to allow them a resting place among us, they would pass through our territory into Canada. There would then be no obligation resting upon us to deliver up "fugitives from labor,"—

"Soon as their lungs inhale our air
That moment are they free."

It thus appears that this method of preserving Slavery, must inevitably destroy it.

The danger of insurrection would also be increased. Upon any quarrel with a foreign power, the standard of liberty would be raised, and their slaves invited to rally around it. Knowing that the alternative was Liberty or Death, they would be the most desperate and blood-thirsty of enemies. Now, they are conscious that the immense physical power of the North would roll over them like an avalanche. Then they would also know, that the free states would either stand neutral, or else encourage them in their endeavors to throw off the yoke of a cruel bondage.

It is necessary that we should hold in just estimation the value of this confederacy, but not have an insane love of its existence. It should be regarded as a means, but not as an end. So far as it tends to establish justice and promote tranquillity, it is worthy of our support. But when it operates as an efficient instrument of evil, when it uses its accumulated might for unworthy purposes, it is entitled to our abhorrence. This subject has long been a theme for sickly declamation. The Union has been held up to view as a thing which of itself was a great good; while it is but a concentration of power which should be dear to us, so far only as it is exerted for the accomplishment of just undertakings and against evil.

Truth has been bargained away, treaties have been broken, for the purpose of promoting the pretended welfare of the Union. We need not go back to the many instances recorded on the pages of former years. Glance but at our own times. See the poor Seminole, hunted from thicket to

thicket; driven from a land for which we cannot urge even the old, worn-out excuse, of wanting it ourselves. Behold the Cherokee, exiled from a home which the plighted faith of our nation had been pledged to preserve inviolate for him and his posterity. The united power of this government held over his prostrate body to warn him of the folly of resistance. What calls for the suppression of *our* principles? what is it that demands that we should abandon all our measures for the liberation of the helpless captive? Ay! what is it that claims the extermination of the Seminole, the expulsion of the Cherokee, the unmolested power to imbrute the oppressed slave? "The integrity of the Union." If it be true, that these states cannot remain united without the constant sacrifice of right; if every cause which is pure and holy must be immolated in its bloody temple; if it be not a means for effecting good, but a tremendous agent of fraud, and all manner of wickedness;—let the Union be dissolved. If I even valued its preservation to the extent of love-lunacy that some appear to, I should not hesitate a moment between its existence and the doing of justice. Like the obedient Patriarch, who prepared to offer up his beloved son on the mount of Moriah, I would bind this Union with joy, and sacrifice it as a victim on the altar of the eternal truth of God. If it be a foul and loathsome monster, which requires for its daily food all that is valuable on earth, and acceptable in heaven, why should we seek to prolong its life? If it be dear to us, only because it ministers to our vanity, because it increases our wealth, and adds to our high worldly renown—why should we care for its preservation? Let this land then be purified, let justice be done,—and if this cannot be without the dissolution of the Union, it is proof of its being founded on the principles of injustice, and its destruction will be a blessing.

The objection is also frequently made, that—

The Slaves are not yet fit for Liberty.

It is said that you must first educate them; that it would be wrong to set them free in their present ignorant and degraded condition. Now if these worthy objectors, who would make a man's right to liberty depend upon his knowledge, do not take care, they may find themselves placed in rather an awkward situation. For if degradation be a sufficient reason for withholding liberty, it necessarily follows, that those who enjoy their liberty and are notwithstanding ignorant and degraded, may rightfully be made slaves. Then the same principle which would keep the ignorant population of the South in bondage, would, if carried out, reduce to servitude the ignorant population of the North. But in truth, if a class of men be degraded, it is the very reason why they should not be slaves. If an individual is so crippled that he can hardly move, would you weigh him down with chains to make him move faster? The objector must have a very high opinion of Slavery as a teacher, when he argues that it is much better than liberty to improve the mind and manners. It does, however, seem rather singular that the colored people should have been so long under the tuition of the first, without appearing the least better fitted for liberty than when they began their education—and therefore I am most decidedly an advocate for a change of masters.

A man must have liberty before he can learn how to use and appreciate it. You might as well expect to teach him to breathe without air, as learn him how to enjoy his freedom while a slave. These sensible objectors must be descendants of that very wise old lady, who advised her son "never to go into the water until he knew how to swim." If education were merely theoretical, the case would be different; but practice must always go along

with theory. Look at the infant before it has attained sufficient strength and skill to balance itself. Do we advise the mother to keep it chained to the floor until it learns how to walk? The child may get a few tumbles before a complete knowledge of locomotion is attained: and if the slave in his early attempts to stand erect in the temple of Liberty, should get a few falls, we must not feel surprised.

The charge is often made, that we are striving to

Excite the Slaves to Insurrection.

It is also asserted, that there is "a kind of free-masonry" by which we communicate with them. Now I suspect that it is that kind of free-masonry which the smallest child manifests, in picking out those who are kind and benevolent, even among strangers. If, however, we can exert a powerful influence over the minds of the slaves, and if it be true that we are using that influence to excite rebellion,—how is it that we do not succeed? There cannot be one single instance of insurrection mentioned, which has occurred since the formation of our society. We may then with more justice argue, that as there were disturbances during the unmolested existence of the Colonization Society before our time, and as there has been none since our organization, that therefore our principles exert a great tendency against, and theirs in favor of, rebellion.

But says one,—You have circulated papers, and pictorial representations among the slaves. Mere assertion, however, proves nothing against our denial. We have, I grant, sent publications to the masters, to Southern lawyers, judges, politicians, &c., but it was their own fault if their slaves obtained them. And even supposing that we had. Would it not be foolish to attempt to excite revolt by publications which they could not read, and which are many of them filled with earnest entreaties, that they should bear their sufferings with patience and meekness. As to pictorial representations,—I should think that those who see the whip descending daily on the shrinking flesh without resistance, would hardly be excited to revenge by its representation on paper. It is the same as contending, that the representation of cruelty is more moving than the suffering itself. While those among the slaves, (we are told that they compose the vast majority,) who never feel nor witness this brutal treatment, if they had sense enough to understand the picture at all, would have their indignation aroused,—not against the master, but against the authors of so gross a libel on his mild and parental character.

How absurd it is to suppose, that the knowledge which the slave must have of there being those who are endeavoring to effect his liberation,—that this knowledge will cause him to revolt. Suppose any one, no matter how uneducated or unpolished he may be, confined unjustly. Would he not be more contented, if he knew that there were those who were laboring continually for his deliverance? And if he felt satisfied that those friends would never cease their exertions until they were successful,—would he not feel even partially reconciled to his lot? But if no ray of comfort pierced the dark confines of his gloomy abode; if he thought that no efforts were being made in his behalf; if the iron of hope-destroyed had entered into the inmost recesses of his soul; if he feared that the friends of his youth had forgotten him, and that he was left to drag out a wretched existence, uncared for and unmourned;—then despair would nourish hatred, and revenge thirst for blood.

I do most sincerely believe, that the rumors which occasionally are wafted through the South, reaching the ears of the oppressed, of there being

those who have taken up the arms of love and truth to effect their deliverance, have a tendency to promote good order, not to excite insurrection.

We are also charged with being favorable to

Amalgamation.

With wishing to intermarry the colored with the white people. But in truth, our principles, if universally adopted, would have the effect of putting an end to those abominations which now abound in the slave-holding states. We should hear nothing, then, of brothers selling their sisters, or fathers their own children.

What do you mean by being opposed to amalgamation? Do you mean that you will not associate or intermarry with colored people without you so choose? If this is your meaning, if opposition to all interference with the choice of associates, be your doctrine,—it is also ours. If you do not wish to keep company with either or any class of our population, no one certainly has a right to make you. We also believe, however, that when any individual feels it to be his or her duty, to mingle in social intercourse with those to whom has been given the dark skin of the African race, though we may regard their ideas upon this subject as visionary, and their conduct as inexpedient, yet granting to them the same unmolested privilege of action which we exercise ourselves, we should not by word or deed attempt to infringe upon the exercise of their just rights.

This charge against us has partly arisen from the fact, that we have no particular corner assigned in our meetings to colored people: that we wish, on board steamboats, and in stages, in taverns, and at all public exhibitions, that men should be treated irrespective of color. We wish to abolish those cruel distinctions, by which, in all public places, colored men are continually taunted with being inferior. If there is any one who does not like to travel with them, let him stay at home, or procure a separate conveyance. Our dislike or aversion is no reason for depriving a man of his just privileges.

We also protest against the allotment to them of any separate pews or benches in our places of worship. Go to your churches and meeting-houses, hear the minister preaching—"God is no respecter of persons," "If you have respect to persons you commit sin," and see the lie direct given to the text by their conduct. All such unjust distinctions made between man and man we wish removed.

This treatment of these people is not owing to any inherent prejudice felt against their color. If it were so, the physician would object to having a colored man sitting alongside of him in his carriage. We should object to having our victuals cooked, or being waited on at table by them. We should make more objection to their continued proximity with us in all the daily intercourse of life. So long as they do not attempt to elevate themselves, to take equal rank with us, we are perfectly contented. Then it is not a prejudice which is felt against their color, for if it were, it would be manifested as much against them when servants as equals. It is pride, a mean, contracted spirit of caste. We have long been accustomed to see them in a menial capacity; and now when they are nobly attempting to raise themselves from the filth and dust of ages, instead of applauding their endeavors, and lending them a helping-hand, we mock at and deride their exertions. Cannot we aid them in this laudable undertaking of self-improvement, and wish them to be treated as equals, without intermarrying with them? There was a meeting held in this city, a short time since, to improve the condition of seamstresses and other females who are compelled to labor for a subsistence. That meeting was composed of *gentlemen of*

standing and influence. Why were they not charged with wishing to intermarry with that class, whose situation in life they were so benevolently striving to better?

But this outcry against amalgamation seems so foolish when we come to examine it, that it is matter of wonder that men of intelligence should have contributed to its circulation. We ask,—why should not the two races intermarry? They answer, because it is disgusting and unnatural,—God has placed an insurmountable barrier between us. Now it appears rather singular, that if these objectors really believe it *unnatural*, that they should make so much noise about that, which, being contrary to the constitution of our nature, can seldom take place. There is a natural prejudice between us, or there is not. If there is, there can be very little danger of much intermarrying. If there is not, there can be no great objection to it if it is done. But it seems that our opponents are not satisfied with our Creator's having made an *effectual* barrier between the two races; but they wish to take measures themselves, which will more effectually prevent intermarriages, than this insurmountable prejudice which God has made. It reminds me of what Knickerbocker records of the early settlers of New England, who he says resolved—"That they would be governed by the laws of God, until they had time to make better."

It is asserted by some that the colored people are naturally inferior to us, but they act as if they thought them superior. Why it is said, that if you remove their disabilities, if you give them equal chances, they will become lawyers, judges, and members of Congress. That there is some dread felt that the colored man will, if invested with equal rights, be a dangerous opponent, is proved by the conduct of the different members of the late reform convention. We shall find, by examining the votes given in that body, that generally the men of intellect and noble spirit, those who have nothing to fear from competition, voted in favor of giving the colored man equal chances and fair play: while the village attorneys, the *learned* debaters on the currency and constitutional law, men of selfish hearts and narrow intellects, who, raised into momentary notice by their office, have disappeared to wallow again in their own mire and littleness, who for very good reasons do not wish to increase the number of competitors for offices of profit and honor, generally supported the no improvement, no justice party.

I cannot, however, leave this subject, without endeavoring to say something which may quiet the fears of those young men who are looking out after partners for life. There are many who often claim my pity, on account of this dread of amalgamation, which appears to have taken possession of their souls. They seem to imagine that if our principles prevail, a time will come, which in horror shall baffle all description; when every one who is unmarried shall be offered up, each coupled with a colored lady, as helpless victims at the shrine of matrimony. In anticipation's glass they behold horrid pictures of coming time,—white young men, flying from house to house, from street to street, from city to city, hotly pursued by crowds of ebon damsels armed for conquest. Ah! when I have listened to accounts of expected scenes like these, my mind dwelling on the deplorable condition which they already seem to realize, I have been insensibly led to remember the pathetic scene related in "The Pickwick Papers," between Mr. Samuel Weller, sr., and his accomplished son. The old man is describing, in his usual graphic manner, the perils of being "sought arter;" but which perils are as a one pound weight to a fifty-sixer, when compared to those dangers which it is supposed now menace the fair-complexioned gentlemen of these United States. "I don't take no pride in it Sammy; it's

a horrid situation. I am actually driven out of house and home by it. The breath was scarcely out of your poor mother-in-law's body, when one old woman sends me a pot of jam, and another a pot of jelly, and another brews a blessed large jug of camomile tea, which she brings in with her own hands. They were all widows, Sammy, all of them, except the camomile tea one, and she was a single young lady of fifty-three. Why, Sammy, if I was to stop here alone one week, just one week, my boy, these ere women would marry me by force and violence afore it was over."

Pursuing my melancholy meditations upon this subject, I have sometimes wondered, whether these nice young men, who cry out so long and loudly against amalgamation, may not, like Mr. Weller, have some reason to complain. Who knows whether they have not been already beset with amorous letters, and tender sonnets from fair colored sisters? Who knows about the pots of jelly, or the jugs of camomile tea, which they may also have received? Who can presume to doubt but what *their* fears are reasonable? Then when any of your young associates cry out against amalgamation, do not hardheartedly ridicule them, but commiserate their unhappy situation in being the victims of love,—a love which may swell into frenzy, and after a while one young man after another disappear, absolutely run off with by some gentle colored maidens.

Now to obviate this objection, and bring into our ranks a large number that appear to be kept out by these dreadful suppositions, I would recommend the passing of a law by our Legislature to the following effect: Be it enacted, &c., That no colored lady shall be allowed to seize upon and "marry by force and violence" any young man having the reputation of being white, without his consent.

Such a law would entirely remove the difficulty,—for we know that the white gentry would never intermarry with the colored ladies without they were forced to; and by preventing the colored ladies from forcing them, the whole objection is removed. As regards the colored gentlemen,—it being, I suppose, nearly impossible to get any law passed in these days of oppression to protect them from the white ladies,—they would have to cut and run, or else patiently submit to their cruel fate.

Conclusion.

I have thus attempted to illustrate, to be sure in an imperfect manner, those principles and measures which this society has been formed to sustain. In so doing, I have endeavored to feel towards those who uphold opposite doctrines the kind spirit of charity. Charity, however, seldom consists in suppressing truth. It is necessary that we should have a correct knowledge of the disease, before we can administer the true remedy. I have spoken that which I believe truth, of American Slavery: not attempting to disguise its deep enormity, its monstrous mind-destroying wickedness. At the same time I have desired to feel none other than feelings of love towards those who are thus oppressing their and our brethren; remembering the prejudices of their education; perceiving the dark veil which has been thrown over their moral vision, by those whom they look to as watchmen on the walls of Zion. This consciousness, however, should not lead us into an encouragement of silence; it should rather incite us to shout louder and louder of the danger. God grant that the same Almighty hand which signified by the rending of the veil of the Temple the ending of the old covenant dispensation, may rend the veil from before their eyes, and end their unhallowed covenant with the Moloch of cruelty and oppression.

When speaking of the sin of slavery, we should not forget our own deep

implication in its guilt. Very few of us, I hope, have any desire to be numbered among those,

“Who compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to.”

We should not forget, then, that even the so-called free states are slaveholders. It would be well for us also to inquire, whether we are not as individuals supporting this system, by partaking of the product of unrequited labor—whether our hands are clean, when we are thus increasing the demand for the productions of slave plantations. In view of these considerations, we cannot but perceive the obligation resting upon us, to spread light on this subject throughout the land; conscious that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to rid ourselves entirely of an indirect participation in guilt, except by effecting the abolition of slavery.

It is rather a mortifying reflection, when we remember that servitude was abolished several centuries ago, throughout the greater part of Europe, by the prevailing influence of Christianity, that at this late day, the same pure and holy faith should still be contending in the new world with a servitude more oppressive in its nature than that which was then overthrown.

There is little need of my saying much to encourage you to greater diligence. The events of the last month have shouted in a voice of thunder,—persevere. I know you too well to believe that you have not responded to the call. Persecution has been waving her lighted torch over the dwellings of the friends of the poor. Curses loud and deep have been heaped upon us. Men of intelligence, and supposed moral worth, have not been wanting to justify violence and outrage. Wonder not; for thus have they persecuted the advocates of right in every age of the world. When glancing back a short distance only, along the page of history, we read how the first opponents of the African slave-trade were treated—when we find that Wilberforce was stigmatized as a fanatic, and a bigot, by men of high influence in church and state,—can we feel surprised at the abuse lavished upon us?

But as the descendants of the Israelites of old garnished and adorned the sepulchres of the prophets, which their fathers had slain; as the posterity of Wilberforce, and the early English abolitionists, now praise the names of those once reviled and abused; so, in coming time, the abolitionists of the present day, the supporters and advocates of the rights of man, shall be held up for the admiration of the noble-minded and good. The poor and despised of the present, shall be the ornaments which will endear this age to the future. I speak not in vain-glorious boasting. Neither do I wish that this consideration should influence your conduct. What is the praise of man? Lavished without discrimination,—heaped much oftener on enemies than on friends. Then let us not be disheartened at the opposition made to us by those upon whom the world has showered its honors. Let us rest satisfied with the assurance which we feel, which every one must feel who is engaged in this righteous cause,—that, whether we succeed or are overcome; whether rejoicing as victors, or mourning as vanquished; whether exulting at the glad result of our labors in the great field of liberty, or regretting that he “who sitteth on the pale horse” has not yet finished his deathly career; that the time must come when truth and righteousness shall prevail.

I have thus brought before you a rather different view of the condition of our land than is commonly heard upon this day. Whether on this anniversary of our nation’s independence, it is not more profitable to think of our faults, than overflow with boasting, I leave you to determine. Perhaps

at this moment the orators in hundreds of villages are sounding forth the glorious truth that "all men are created equal;" extolling this country as the freest and most enlightened on the earth; pouring into the ears of unnumbered auditors a surfeit of panegyric and inflated commendation. Ah! the notes of the Tocsin are now swelling throughout the land, pealing the glad cry of liberty and universal freedom; but they are mingled with the shrieks, and groans, and dying agonies of the stricken slave.

We will not forget, then, in joy for our own happiness, him who is pining in bondage. We unite on this occasion with our brethren in the North, or wherever they may be found, in telling of our nation's inconsistency, of the woes, and horrors, and blighting influence of servitude. We unite our voices with all that may now be ascending, in earnest advocacy for the down-trodden in mind and body, to the throne of the Most High.

May we prosecute this cause with undiminished vigor. Many of you, my young companions, will soon enter upon the stage of active manhood. May you carry out the principles which we have united to support, into all the pursuits of life; remembering in every action that duty is always ultimately expedient. So may we live—

"That when the summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
We go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach our graves,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."